

## 42, 44 Chestnut Street (circa 1845)

From: Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981 (E. W. Gordon, Consultant)\*:



42, 44 Chestnut Street

2015

Numbers 42- 44 Chestnut Street was originally built as a three-story Greek Revival double house with a gable roof. Originally identical, both have granite basements, three bay façades, and side hall plans.

Recessed entrances are reached by flights of granite steps with curvilinear Rococo Revival cast iron stair railings. The entry walls have wood paneling. The front doors are enframed by multi-pane sidelights and rectangular transoms. Number 42 retains its pedimented brownstone entrance lintel. Number 44 has a deep-bracketed door hood with a well-carved floral motif on the sides of the brackets. The door hood supports an oriel window with carved gingerbread detail above the windows and a well-molded cornice. The windows, in general have simple brownstone sills and lintels. Fire escapes are located at the center of 42-44 at floors one and two.

Builder: Samuel M Pook

Original owner: 42-?, 44-Samuel M Pook

Numbers 42 and 44 Chestnut Street, built circa 1845, rank among the first houses built on Chestnut Street. They are clearly shown on the 1848 panoramic view from the Bunker Hill Monument. This "birds eye view" shows that 42 and 44 once shared the same gable roof. The rear wall of these



44 Chestnut Street, door hood and oriel detail

2015

buildings is shown with one story columned porch. Both have been "updated" circa 1850s or 1860s. Number 42's gable roof was removed and replaced by a flat roof with low brick firewalls. Number 44 acquired a deep-bracketed door hood which supports a polygonal oriel window. Thus this Greek Revival double house was transformed into two visually distinct townhouses with the addition of Italianate treatments.



1848 panoramic view, 42, 44 Chestnut (#51@black arrow)

These houses' land was once part of the George Adams Kettel estate (see form on numbers 28-34 Chestnut for more information on the Kettel estate). On August 4, 1844 Samuel Pook, "US naval constructor" paid George A Kettel \$1107.62 for number 44's land. Presumably Pook purchased 42's land at about the same time. The Kettel/Pook deed stipulated that Pook had "to erect thereon a handsome brick dwelling house of

not less than 2 1/2 stories in height within two years of the date thereof", indicating that 44 had to have been built by October 1846.

Samuel Pook was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1843 to circa 1853. He is first listed in Charlestown directories in 1845. At that time he was a "naval constructor" living at 8 Harvard row. By 1848 he is listed as living "on Chestnut Street" and by 1852, the last listing, at 44 Chestnut Street". On November 6, 1854 Samuel Pook "of Charlestown, recently, but now the city of Washington, naval constructor", sold 44 to John R Nichols of Charlestown, machinist, for \$6800. Nichols, in turn, sold it to Frank K Fuller, cashier, Merchants Bank, Charlestown for \$7250. From 1863 until approximately 1870, 44 was owned by John S Misroon, Commander, United States Navy. By 1875 it was owned by Misroon's heirs; by 1885, by a J N Misroon, while Herman H Misroon, clerk, 35 Oliver Street, Boston, is listed as a boarder there.

By 1892 Patrick O'Riordan owned the house. Further research is needed to determine if O'Riordan ever lived at 44 or if it was just one of his many Charlestown income properties. He was a successful contractor/builder, whose business was statewide in scope. By 1901 a Margaret Monagle owned 44, and, by 1911 an Elizabeth Gorman was this property's owner.

Presumably Samuel Pook was the original owner/builder of 42 Chestnut. Further research is needed to unravel 42's deed chronology. In the atlas of 1875 this house is labeled "Perkins". Later owners included a Sara Woodman, 1880s-early 1900s, and a Bridget M Cannon, 1911.

Bibliography:  
Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Panoramic view of Charles-1848

Middlesex deeds-448:228, 681:491, 741: 89, 881:392

Charlestown directories-1834-74

Boston directories-post 1875

\*Digitized and edited, without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, and with addition of current photographs. In the case of houses that have been altered since the survey, these photographs may not entirely correspond to the architectural description. If earlier photographs of suitable quality are available, these have been included.

R. Dinsmore